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ABSTRACT

This project developed and validated a method for collecting and reporting information about students' preparation in English for college level work. Over 300 high school seniors completed the "Experiences in English" inventory and a questionnaire on their academic background, interests, and their reactions to the inventory. Additional data, including academic grades and Admissions Testing Program report information, were collected. Based on analyses of these data, the inventory was revised to eliminate some free-response form questions and to change others into a multiple choice format. Two prototype reports, generated from the revised inventory, have been developed. An individual report, for student self-evaluation, provides figural and narrative displays of the student's responses to 10 aspects of English preparation and a performance description in both absolute and relative terms. A summary report, for institutions, provides similar information concerning a group of students, but includes a more detailed numerical presentation of results. Further discussion is needed on the uses and potential uses of these reports. Normative information, information validity data collection methods, and report delivery arrangements need investigation before introducing the profiles as a College Board Service. Appendices contain the questionnaire, Experiences in English inventory, and Summary Report prototypes. (BS)

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College Board Report

No. 84-2

A Profile of Preparation in English: Phase II

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TM 840 687

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Educational Testing Service

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College Entrance Examination Board, New York, 1984

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ABSTRACT

This is the report of a project that was undertaken to develop and validate a method for collecting and reporting information about students' preparation in English for college-level work. Information was gathered from students through a self-report inventory, *Experiences in English*. Then a prototype report was prepared in the form of a profile—an evaluation of a student's strengths and weaknesses in each of several major aspects of use of the language.

INTRODUCTION

In Phase I of the project, the inventory was developed, reviewed by high school and college instructors and curriculum coordinators, and revised. A very limited pretest was conducted, in which thirty-one high school seniors completed the draft inventory; data were insufficient to support formal analyses, but provided preliminary indications that the questions were meaningful to students and that students could provide differentiated answers to them. Minor further revisions were made on the basis of the pretest.

After Phase I was completed, three major activities were undertaken in Phase II:

1. Data collection and analysis

Over 300 high school seniors completed the inventory and a brief questionnaire dealing with their academic background and interests and with their reactions to the inventory. Their data were supplemented with grades obtained from school records and with selected information drawn from Admissions Testing Program (ATP) reports. Analyses of these data served as the basis for revising the inventory.

2. Revision of the inventory

Questions that did not appear to provide useful information were dropped from the inventory, and questions that had been asked in free-response form were revised so that the inventory can now be scored entirely by machine.

3. Development of prototype reports

A prototype of the report to be provided to an individual student was developed. A prototype report to a high school, summarizing the responses of a group of students, also was prepared.

Discussion of these activities follows immediately. Then a summary is given, along with a brief consideration of further steps required before the inventory and reports based on it could be offered as a College Board service.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Data collection and analysis were intended to serve several purposes. One major objective was to determine how questions within and across the various sections of the inventory are related to one another, so that logically and theoretically determined groupings of questions could be supported or revised as appropriate in light of empirical results. Another objective was to study relations of inventory responses to grades and other available data, in order to determine which (or whether) self-report responses contain information that is not redundant with that obtainable from more objective sources. A third objective was to examine students' reactions to the inventory to obtain preliminary indications of how they would react to a potential offering of a student report based upon it.

Data Collection

Sample. The inventory was completed by 335 high school seniors. One private school obtained a small number (16) of paid volunteers. The remainder of the sample, drawn from five public high schools, consisted of intact classes tested during regularly scheduled English classes. Classes were chosen to represent a broad range of ability but to include mainly students who planned to enter college upon graduation.

Inventory. The inventory administered to these students was essentially the version reproduced in the Phase I final report of the project to the Joint Staff Research and Development Committee (JSRDC) of Educational Testing Service (ETS). Minor revisions of a few questions had been made as a result of the small pretest conducted at the end of that phase.

Additional data. Students completed a brief questionnaire dealing with their academic background and interests and with their reactions to the inventory and proposed report. This questionnaire is reproduced in Appendix A.

With the students' permission, the schools provided information on students' academic performance. Information requested consisted of full-year English grades for each year of high school, cumulative grade-point average (GPA) for grades 11 and 12, and cumulative high school GPA. Nearly complete English grade records were obtained; GPA was available for approximately two-thirds of the sample.

The students also gave permission for project staff to obtain and use special ATP reports. From these reports, 27 potentially relevant variables were drawn for the 299 students for whom they were available; among these were selected background questions, test scores, and activities undertaken while in high school or intended when in college.

Description of the Sample

The sample used in analyses consisted of the 330 students who provided nearly complete response data for the inventory. Of these students, 54 percent were male; 93 percent of those responding to the Student Descriptive Questionnaire (SDQ) question on ethnicity were white. Seventy-four percent indicated an intention to attend a four-year college, while another 19 percent planned enrollment at a two-year institution.

Mean self-reported Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) verbal score was 490, with a range from 250 to 730 (N = 215). The mean SAT verbal from ATP reports was 441, with a range from 200 to 650 (N = 299). Mean actual 11th grade full-year English grade, after conversion of all grades to a common 9-point scale, fell between the equivalent of a B and a B− (N = 324).

Preliminary Analyses

Frequency distributions of responses to each question were examined. These provided the basis for substitution of modal values in the small number of instances in which data were missing, to permit correlational analyses to be performed on complete data matrices. They also allowed a determination of whether there were any questions for which the response distributions were so extreme as to indicate that they should be excluded from analysis. Only three questions with such extreme responses were found, and these were questions that could not be excluded if the representation of a domain of interest was to be kept conceptually complete; for example, in indicating their facility in the use of reference sources, virtually all students indicated a high degree of skill in using a desk dictionary.

Three sections of the inventory asked for free-response answers to questions concerning the frequency with which students had engaged in various activities during their high school careers. Answers to these questions were rescaled so as to avoid undue influence on correlational results of the small number of instances in which extremely high frequencies were reported.

Three additional sections of the inventory required students to compose answers to questions concerning personally important experiences they had had in writing, reading, and speaking. Responses to these questions were categorized in a scheme intended to capture both the nature of the experience (for example, the kind of writing the student had done) and the reason this experience was important to the student. It was intended that these categories be converted to quantitative values so that they could provide additional variables for the correlational analyses. However, these sections provided very little of interest; many students appeared to have little or no significant experience to report and gave only superficial justification for the importance of what they did report. These sections were dropped from further consideration and have been excluded from the most recent revision of the inventory.

Correlational and Factor Analyses of Inventory Responses

Correlational and factor analyses were carried out in order to determine the degree to which conceptually distinct aspects of preparation in English were actually distinguished by students' self-evaluations and in order to aid in determining appropriate groupings of questions to be used in developing reports. Because of the very large number of individual questions included in the inventory, these analyses were conducted in two stages. First, item-by-item analyses were done separately for each of eight conceptually distinct sections of the inventory. Second, analyses of clusters of questions across the entire inventory were performed.

Analyses within sections of the inventory

Correlational analyses at the level of individual questions showed that virtually every question in the inventory had at least a few moderate correlations (.3 or .4) with other conceptually related questions and thus could contribute to scales based on combinations of such questions. At the same time, very few correlations above .5 were found, and no single pair of questions correlated as high as .7. Thus, no questions could be judged to be totally redundant with one another.

Factor analytic results, in general, were not illuminating. The several rules of thumb commonly employed to determine the appropriate number of factors to extract yielded contradictory results, and there were few instances in which an empirically suggested regrouping of questions could be accepted on conceptual grounds. The major exception to this conclusion involved the analysis of eleven questions asking the student to indicate the number of books of a given type he or she had read in the last twelve months. The seven questions involving categories of nonfiction clustered together to form one factor, while the four involving fiction also clustered with one another. It was concluded that the empirical results provided no justification for revision of the topical groupings that had been developed on grounds of conceptual and theoretical relations among the questions.

Analyses across sections of the inventory

The second series of analyses involved thirty scales representing the major topics included within the inventory. The number of questions on which each scale was based varied from a low of one (a single question dealing with the student's success in examination writing) to a high of seventeen (kinds of extracurricular writing the student

reported doing while in high school). The number of topics representing each of the eight major sections of the inventory also varied, from two (for example, separate topics for speaking and for listening within a section entitled "Speaking and Listening Experiences") to seven (a detailed breakdown of the various kinds of writing the student had engaged in within his or her high school courses).

Correlational analyses revealed that one set of topics, those for which students reported the number of times that they engaged in an activity, yielded scores with very little relation to those from another set, in which the student reported his or her level of success or skill in an undertaking. This separation may owe as much to method—the kind of question asked—as to substance. Within each of these sets of questions, relatively substantial relations were sometimes found between topics drawn from separate sections of the inventory; particularly strong were relations between several topics representing the student's success in reading and that in listening within high school course work. However, no instances were found of intertopic correlation as high as .7, indicating that even with the greater reliability associated with scales based on groups of questions, the various topics included in the inventory elicited differentiated responses from the students.

A series of factor analyses was performed to examine the structure for different numbers of factors derived from these scales. As with the factor analyses of questions within individual sections of the inventory, these analyses failed to suggest an empirical basis for revising the a priori groupings of questions into topics.

Relations of Inventory Scores to Other Variables

Correlations were obtained between scales derived from the inventory and the additional variables available for these students—responses to the questionnaire appended to the inventory, grade information from school records, and variables derived from the ATP report. These correlations were examined with two questions in mind.

First, how strongly are self-report indices related to these variables, particularly to test scores and grades, the most objective and reliable available indicators of students' skills? Any self-report scale that had extremely high correlations with these measures might be dropped from consideration as redundant. On the other hand, any scale that had no relation at all to the objective measures might also be questioned; self-reports may be expected to provide somewhat different information from that available from grades and tests, but at least modest correlations woud be expected if a scale contained valid information about students' abilities.

Second, how do topics within various sections of the inventory differ in their relation to these external variables? If there are substantial differences from topic to topic, there is strong justification for reporting responses to these topics separately. If, however, topics within a section have similar relations to external variables, scales representing an amalgamation of responses across these topics may be preferable, both to provide economy in the number of scales reported and to provide the increased reliability expected when scales are based on responses to a greater number of questions.

A complete presentation of the correlational results is not warranted. Salient features of the results are summarized below; Appendix B includes a table showing relations of the ten inventory scores chosen for inclusion in the profile report with selected variables from these analyses.

Levels of relations with test scores and grades

There were no instances in which self-report scores correlated so highly with objective indices of students' skills as to suggest that the self-report information was redundant. In fact, most correlations were quite modest in magnitude. For the SAT verbal score, the most substantial relations were correlations of .41 with a score representing an average of the student's responses to questions concerning his or her success in reading experiences, .34 for success in dealing with the processes of writing, .31 for success in listening, .26 for skill in using reference sources, and .23 for the number of works of fiction read in the last twelve months. Other verbal scores had generally lower correlations, with the exception of the Test of Standard Written English (TSWE), which had somewhat higher correlations with scores representing success in aspects of writing than did the SAT-verbal score. The TSWE correlated .39 with a total score for success in dealing with the processes of writing.

For grades, the 11th grade full-year English grade had the most substantial relations with inventory scores. It correlated .36 with success in dealing with the processes of writing, and .23 with several additional scores dealing with experiences in reading and writing.

A few inventory scores had no appreciable relations with any test or grade variables. These included topics dealing with the students' use of the media, extracurricular experiences in writing and in speech and drama, the number of nonfiction works read in the last twelve months, and the student's report of his or her skill in using technological aids and various methods of collecting information for use in completing school assignments.

Relations with other ATP variables

Two additional sets of variables from the ATP report showed noteworthy relations with a number of inventory scores. Students' self-rated skills in creative writing, spoken expression, and written expression correlated in the .20s with their inventory reports of extracurricular writing and speech and drama, with skill in using reference works, and with reading experiences. These self-ratings correlated in the .30s with reported success in dealing with the processes of writing; and one of them, spoken expression, correlated .46 with the inventory score for success in speaking. These

relations indicate that there is moderate consistency over occasions in the self-ratings students provide of their skills and successes.

Students' plans to attempt to obtain advanced placement in English (and, to a lesser degree, in other subjects) also showed moderate correlations with a number of inventory scores; the largest was a correlation of .32 with success in dealing with the processes of writing.

Differences in correlations among topics within sections

One purpose in examining the correlational results was to aid in determining whether the English profile should include separate presentations of the various topics that had been distinguished within major sections of the inventory. For most sections, the relations of inventory scores to external variables suggested that a smaller number of scores representing responses to entire sections of the inventory would be preferable. There was little evidence of differential correlations from topic to topic, except for differences that might be anticipated on the basis of the number of questions included within a topic, and thus, the expected reliability of the score. The few exceptions to this conclusion will be mentioned below in discussing the content revisions made in the inventory.

Student Reactions

Students completed a questionnaire that included several questions dealing with their reactions to the inventory and to the prospect of receiving a report based on their responses to it. The first question asked whether they would see a summary report as useful. Forty-nine percent indicated that such a report would be useful, 41 percent were uncertain, and 10 percent indicated that it would not be useful.

When asked how they would use a report, 58pcent said that they would use it to increase their own understanding of their preparation in English, while 45 percent would use it in planning ways to enrich their experiences in English. (Multiple responses were permitted.) Many fewer indicated that they would discuss the report with an advisor or a counselor (13 percent) or with their English teacher (18 percent).

Students were asked whether they had experienced any problems in completing the inventory. Thirty-five percent gave an affirmative answer. Two parts of the inventory stood out in their comments as sources of difficulty. One involved the several sections of the inventory in which students were asked to indicate how many hours a week they used various media or the number of times they had engaged in each of a number of extracurricular activities. The other involved the three pages at the end of the inventory in which they were asked to describe significant experiences they had had in writing, reading, and speaking. Both sets of difficulties should be ameliorated by subsequent revisions of the inventory.

In terms of overall reactions, about 6 percent of the students offered a general negative response to the inventory. Most of these responses consisted of complaints that the inventory was too long or was repetitious; a few students objected to the idea of self-assessment per se, as something either they or other students were unable to perform objectively. On the other hand, many positive reactions were offered, including statements that filling out the inventory had itself been a useful learning experience and suggestions that the task should be mandatory for high school students.

Time Required to Complete the Inventory

A full class period provided more than ample time for students to complete the inventory and the questionnaire appended to it. Most students completed the inventory in no more than thirty minutes. It is estimated that the revised version described below should require no more than twenty minutes for a large majority of high school seniors.

REVISION OF THE INVENTORY

The inventory was revised with the objectives of decreasing its length, eliminating questions that did not appear to contribute potentially useful information, and recasting several free-response sections so that the responses they elicited could be machine-scored. The analyses and student reactions presented above served to provide guidelines, rather than mandates, for these revisions; the available data support judgments rather than strong conclusions as to what information would be seen as valuable by potential users of reports. Therefore, the revised inventory should be viewed as still in a provisional form, pending further discussion of the uses to which it may be put.

The revised inventory is presented as Appendix C. The ways in which this version differs from the preceding one are described below.

Use of Various Media for Information or Entertainment

In the earlier version of the inventory, this section consisted of fifteen questions dealing with the number of hours per week the student spent using various media for school assignments, for his or her own information or education, or for entertainment; four additional questions asked about attendance at plays, concerts, and lectures. Development of a section on usage of the media had been an area of some difficulty in the Phase I discussions with English instructors and curriculum coordinators; the consultants generally favored inclusion of questions dealing with the media but differed dramatically in the kinds of questions they suggested. It is likely that some questions within this domain would be viewed as valuable by some potential

users of an English profile, but the present revised version deletes the section entirely. One reason for this exclusion is the difficulty students experienced in estimating the time they spend in these activities. More important, scales based upon these questions failed almost completely to correlate with any of the objective indices of students' skills that were available. The hours-per-week scales had no correlations as great as .2 with any external measure, while the number-of-attendances-per-year scales had only two correlations in the .20s—with self-rated skill in creative writing and in written expression from the SDQ.

Extracurricular Activities

Reports of extracurricular activities in two topics—writing and speech and drama—also failed to correlate with objective measures of skills. However, they showed consistent correlations in the high .20s with SDQ self-reported skills, with involvement in journalistic endeavors, and with students' plans to attempt to obtain advanced placement in college English. This section was retained but was recast into a five-choice multiple-choice form, both to simplify the student's task in completing the section and to permit machine scoring of the responses.

Books Students Had Read

Factor analysis of this section indicated that two clear factors were present, one dealing with the number of fiction works a student had read in the last twelve months, the other dealing with the number of nonfiction works. Correlational analyses indicated that the scale for number of fictional books read was largely responsible for the relations between answers in this section and objective measures. Excluding nonfiction from the inventory would not, however, be conceptually sound; to the degree that the inventory serves a purpose by "sending messages" to students, its messages should be balanced ones. A possible revision of this section would involve collapsing the eleven present questions into two, one for fiction and one for nonfiction. The present version, however, simply involves a recasting of the questions into multiple-choice format.

Use of Various Sources of Information

In its earlier form, this section contained three topics, asking the student to evaluate his or her skill in using reference sources, technological aids, and various methods of collecting information for use in completing school assignments. A scale based on the first of these topics had moderate correlations with objective indices of students' skills, but scales based on the latter two topics had essentially no relations with any external variable. Because of the low relations and because these two topics are relatively peripheral to "English," the two were dropped from the inventory, and the section was retitled "Using Reference Sources."

Personal Experience in Writing, Reading, and Speaking

Three sections at the end of the original inventory required that students compose free-response statements concerning significant experiences they had had in writing, in reading, and in speaking. Students reported great difficulty in completing these sections and gave responses that could not easily be evaluated. Eliminating these sections should decrease appreciably the time required to complete the inventory and will result in an inventory that can be processed entirely by machine.

This revision may not be without some cost. In earlier discussions with consultants, the inclusion of a sample of a student's free writing was seen as particularly valuable by those involved in instruction in English. The absence of these sections is unlikely to decrease the perceived value of the profile to students or to school administrators, but it could be an important consideration among those who are involved in English instruction. Moreover, these sections clearly send a message to students—the substantial numbers who indicated that they had had no significant experience in these activities almost certainly were indicating their awareness of a lack in their experience as well as their difficulty in answering the question.

DEVELOPMENT OF PROTOTYPE REPORTS

Two prototype reports have been developed. The first is a report to an individual student of his or her own preparation, while the second is a summary for an institution based on the responses of a group of students.

Each of these reports provides a figural presentation of data for ten major aspects of preparation in English. These correspond closely to the major sections of the inventory determined on an a priori basis; they are consistent with, rather than derived from, the results of the analyses described above.

For the individual report (see Appendix D), the student's average response for each aspect of preparation is presented along with data showing the performance of the entire group of students who completed the inventory. Responses are placed on a 5-point scale, identified both by numbers (ranging from 1 as the lowest to 5 as the highest category available) and a verbal descriptor. The student's position on this scale is identified by an *X*, while the group results are presented as a vertical line covering the range from the 25th to the 75th percentile of average responses for those in the reference group. Thus, the student can determine by inspection whether his or her responses fall into the upper one fourth, the middle half, or the lower one-fourth of the distribution; more precise comparison is available by examination of exactly where the *X*s and lines fall on the scale, but the student need not deal with such numbers unless he or she wishes to do so.

Below the figural display in the individual report a narrative summary is provided. This summary provides three kinds of information. First, it gives a verbal statement of the student's scores in absolute terms, referenced to the scales provided in the figures. Thus, for example, a student whose average response fell between 4.5 and 5.0 for questions included within the section "Experiences with the Processes of Writing" would be told that, "You reported that you were very successful in dealing with the processes of writing." Second, it restates the comparative information provided in the figure, characterizing the student's average response as above, within, or below the range of the middle 50 percent of students completing the inventory. Finally, for three sections that can be subdivided into a number of distinct topics, it lists by name those topics on which the student fell above and those on which he or she fell below the middle 50 percent of the group.

This presentation was judged to provide as much detail as would be appropriate for a student, particularly given the likelihood that students would prefer to interpret the report themselves rather than turn to a counselor or teacher for guidance. It also gives the two kinds of information that it would be feasible to provide in early stages of operational use of the profile—an absolute statement and a comparison of the student's responses with those of a reference group. Other kinds of information might be incorporated in the report but would require more extensive data collection and experience with the inventory before it would be feasible to include them. For example, the student's responses might be compared with those of students who were successful in gaining admission to colleges, perhaps with some segmentation of colleges into several degrees of selectivity; the responses might be compared with those of students who were successful in first-year college English courses at several different levels of rigor; or they might be compared with the consensus judgments of faculty members as to levels of skills necessary for success in college work.

The decision structure required to allow computer generation of the individual report has been specified; the prototype shown in Appendix D was produced following that logic. Further work will be required to assure that the statements made to students involve the most useful comparisons that can be made and to improve the flow of the language of the report.

The prototype of the institutional summary (see Appendix E) is similar in conception to the individual report, but it provides somewhat greater numerical detail. For each of the ten major aspects of preparation in English, two figural displays are provided. One shows the median response and the range from the 25th to the 75th percentile for all students from the institution who completed the inventory; the second shows the median and the range from the 25th to the 75th percentile for the reference group of all students completing the inventory. This same information is presented in numerical form below the figures. A further presentation is made of median values for the institution and for the reference group for all those topics included within three sections of the inventory.

As with the individual report, this summary could be augmented in various ways. For example, institutions might value reports for particular segments of their students, such as those applying to colleges of varying degrees of selectivity or those who had completed various curricula within the high school. Moreover, it is an open question whether institutions should be offered still more detail, in the form of the responses of their students and of students in a reference group to each of the individual questions on the inventory. Such information could be useful but carries some risk in that it could lead to decisions to specify instructional emphasis on very specific items rather than on conceptually meaningful areas of study. For example, it is clear from the students' reactions to the inventory that many of them have had very little experience in speaking within their high school courses. An appropriate reaction to that finding would be to consider broadly the ways in which speaking experience could be increased, not to react to a group's low self-rated success in "expressing your own feelings about an issue" by developing a series of exercises focused on this single question.

Further discussion of the primary uses of the inventory and of the kinds of data that institutions might be willing to provide for incorporation into a report, or might wish to obtain as part of a report, will be needed before a determination is made of the final form in which the profile should be presented.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Three hundred thirty high school seniors responded to the inventory *Experiences in English*, completed a questionnaire dealing with their academic background and interests and with their reactions to the inventory, and provided access to their academic grades and their ATP reports. Analyses of their data contributed to a revision of the inventory, consisting mainly of the elimination of some questions that had been asked in free-response form and a recasting of the remainder into a multiple-choice format. The revised inventory should require about twenty minutes for completion by most students and provides the basis for the generation of two reports. An individual report, intended for use by the student for his or her own self-evaluation, provides figural and narrative displays of the student's responses to ten major aspects of preparation in English and offers a description of the performance, both in absolute terms and relative to the responses of a reference group. A summary report for an institution provides similar information concerning a group of students, but it includes more detailed numerical presentation of results than does the individual report.

Most of the aspects of preparation in English that are included in the reports involve self-assessments that have moderate relations with objective measures, principally ATP

scores and high school grades, and, in some cases, with SDQ responses to questions concerning students' skills. The relations are not strong enough to suggest that the self-report results are redundant with the information presently available from the ATP, but they do encourage confidence that there is at least some validity to the self-report data.

The prototype reports that have been developed will provide a basis for more focused discussions concerning several potential classes of users. It was assumed in proposing the Phase II investigation that the primary use of the English profile would be by individual students, to serve as an aid in their own evaluation of their strengths and educational plans. Students' reactions to the inventory were generally positive, and the principal difficulties they reported in completing it should be resolved by the modifications that have since been made. However, these reactions were obtained in the absence of any concrete illustration of what a student's report would contain or of a definitive indication of the conditions under which it would be delivered. It remains to be determined whether a report that it is feasible to produce would be well-enough received to justify its introduction as an operational service.

Further discussion might also include an investigation of the potential usefulness of a summary report directed to high schools. Such a report could have value in helping a school determine its students' perceptions of their skills and of areas in which they lack the experiences that would prepare them for college work; a link between it and the Educational EQuality Project might provide a context in which its introduction would find support.

Whatever decisions are made about the potential uses of the profile, several steps remain before it can be introduced as a College Board service. It is likely that a report will require the development of a base of normative information to allow comparisons of students, either individually or in groups, with appropriate reference groups. Accumulation of that information may well require the development of cooperative relations with groups of colleges whose data would be included. Evidence for the validity of the information to be reported must also be obtained. The level of effort required may differ depending on the primary use that is assumed; particularly careful validation will be required if individuals will be assumed to be making educational plans on the basis on the report, perhaps less if the report is seen primarily as a source of descriptive information about groups of students for use by an institution. Finally, investigation must be made of possible arrangements for collecting responses to the inventory and for delivering reports to the users of the information.

Appendix A. Questionnaire Administered to Students Completing the Inventory

Background Information

Is English your best language? Yes_____ No_____
SAT scores, if available: Verbal_____ Math_____
Grade received in most recent full-year English course completed: _____
Sex: Female_____ Male_____
Date of Birth: Month_____ Day_____ Year_____
Plans for further education (check one):

_____ I plan to attend a four-year college or university.
_____ I plan to attend a two-year college and then transfer to a four-year school.
_____ I plan to attend a two-year college only.
_____ I plan further education but not in a college or university.
_____ I do not plan further education.

If you plan to attend a college or university:

What school(s) do you plan or hope to attend? _____

_____

What will be your major field of study? _____

_____

Reactions

Would a summary report based on your answers to this inventory be useful to you?
Yes_____ Uncertain_____ No_____
How would you make use of a summary report based on this inventory? (Check all that apply.)

_____ I would use the report to increase my own understanding of my preparation in English.
_____ I would discuss the report with an advisor or a guidance counselor.
_____ I would discuss the report with my English teacher or another teacher.
_____ I would use the report in planning ways to enrich my experiences in English.
_____ Other: _____

Did you have any problems answering a part or parts of this inventory?
Yes_____ No_____
If yes, which parts? (Indicate page number and item by number or name):

_____

_____

_____

_____

Additional comments:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for your assistance.

Appendix B. Correlations of Inventory Scores with Selected Variables

Inventory Scores	Grade 11 English Grade		SAT Verbal Score		TSWE	SDQ Self-Rated Skills			
	Self-Reported	Actual	Self-Reported	Actual		Creative Writing	Spoken Expression	Written Expression	Plan AP English
Dealing with the Processes of Writing	.32	.36	.36	.34	.39	.34	.30	.38	.32
Doing Different Kinds of Writing	.20	.23	.17	.11	.13	.27	.28	.27	.31
Reading	.20	.23	.43	.41	.38	.27	.31	.29	.24
Speaking	.17	.19	.22	.19	.21	.33	.46	.37	.30
Listening	.14	.16	.32	.31	.26	.16	.33	.28	.25
Using Reference Sources	.15	.18	.31	.26	.21	.23	.25	.21	.22
Extracurricular Writing	.13	.17	−.03	−.07	.03	.24	.24	.21	.25
Extracurricular Speech and Drama	.08	.12	.10	.07	.08	.27	.31	.28	.27
Reading Nonfiction	.07	.14	.16	.14	.13	.14	.21	.19	.22
Reading Fiction	.24	.23	.25	.23	.31	.16	.12	.15	.20
N	312	324	215	299	298	255	256	255	299

Appendix C. Revised Inventory, *Experiences in English*

This questionnaire asks about your experiences in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Some of the questions ask what you have done in your high school courses (any of them, not just courses called "English"), while others ask about things you may have done on your own.

The purpose is to help you discover how well prepared you are for the first year of college work. Most students have some idea about their preparation from the grades and test scores they have received. These questions, and the summary report that will be mailed to you, should help you think in more specific, detailed terms about the strengths and weaknesses in your preparation, and they should help you to compare your experiences with the experiences of other students who will be beginning college work.

The questionnaire and the report are meant for a student's own use. They will not be sent to college as part of the application procedure; no one else will see them unless you want to share them.

Extracurricular Activities

Items 1 to 25 below are concerned with writing and speaking you have done *outside your school course work*. For each item, answer the following question:

How many times have you done each of the following while you have been in high school?

A. 11 or more times
B. 6 to 10 times
C. 3 to 5 times
D. 1 or 2 times
E. Never

Kinds of writing

1. writing just to get ideas or feelings down on paper _____
2. journal, diary, or notebook _____
3. short story _____
4. poem _____
5. play or scene for a play _____
6. script for a film or for a radio or television show _____
7. letter to the editor of a newspaper or magazine _____
8. letter to a political figure (e.g., the mayor, a senator) _____
9. article for a newspaper, magazine, or yearbook _____

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10. literary article _____
11. scientific article _____
12. letter to a friend or relative _____
13. notes or outlines to help in planning an activity _____
14. minutes for a meeting of a club or other organization _____
15. business letter requesting information or ordering merchandise _____
16. applicaton for a job _____
17. application for an award or admission to an educational program _____

Speech and drama

18. had a role in a play or film _____
19. took part in a public-speaking contest or a formal debate _____
20. gave a report or speech to a club or other small group _____
21. gave a speech to a large group, such as at a school assembly _____
22. served as master of ceremonies for a show, a banquet, or an awards function _____
23. had a role on a radio or television program _____
24. was a spokesperson for a group appearing before PTA, administration, etc. _____
25. talked with voters about a candidate's merits _____

Books You Have Read

Items 1 to 11 below are concerned with the number of books of various kinds you have read in the last twelve months, *either for school assignments or on your own*. For each kind of book, answer the following question:

How many books of this kind have you read in the last twelve months?
A. 11 or more
B. 6 to 10
C. 3 to 5
D. 1 or 2
E. None

1. books about history, politics, or current events _____
2. books about contemporary people _____
3. scientific books _____
4. psychology or self-help books (e.g., vocabulary improvement courses) _____
5. religious books _____
6. books telling how to repair, build, buy, or do things _____
7. fiction for light entertainment (e.g., adventure, mystery, romance) _____
8. serious fiction _____
9. plays _____
10. poetry _____
11. books about the arts _____

Using Reference Sources

Items 1 to 13 below deal with *sources of information* that you might use in completing school assignments.

For each item, indicate that:
A. you are skilled in using this item in completing school assignments.
B. you have some familiarity with the use of this item but would need more practice to become skillful.
C. you have never used this item in completing school assignments.

1. desk dictionary _____
2. unabridged dictionary _____
3. foreign language dictionary _____
4. thesaurus _____
5. glossary _____

6. bibliography _____
7. encyclopedia _____
8. atlas _____
9. handbook of technical information _____
10. college textbook _____
11. manual on writing style _____
12. book of quotations _____
13. library card file _____

Experiences with the Process of Writing

Items 1 to 18 below are concerned with experiences you have had in writing *in any of your high school courses*. For each item answer the following question:

How successful have you been in this activity?
A. very successful—I have done it well most times I've had to.
B. usually successful—I have done it well more times than not.
C. sometimes successful—I have done it well at times, but I have had problems at other times.
D. not successful—I usually haven't done it well.
E. I don't know—I haven't tried it often enough.

Thinking about an assignment

1. understanding what is expected in an assignment _____
2. choosing or thinking of a topic _____
3. developing ideas, gathering information, and finding examples _____
4. selecting ideas and information to be included _____

Organizing

5. making outlines, notes, or lists of ideas _____
6. deciding which are main and which are supporting ideas _____
7. deciding on the order in which ideas will be presented _____
8. providing a clear central idea for each paragraph _____
9. making transitions from one part of a presentation to another _____

Revising

10. correcting spelling, punctuation, and grammar _____
11. improving choices of words and sentence phrasing _____
12. improving arrangements of ideas and paragraphs _____
13. adding information or taking out information _____

Developing a good writing style

14. expressing ideas briefly and clearly _____
15. expressing ideas in ways that make them interesting to the reader _____

Writing for different purposes

16. writing differently for different kinds of assignments _____
17. taking into account the needs of different audiences _____
18. writing for distant audiences as well as for familiar and sympathetic ones _____

Completing Various Kinds of Writing Assignments

Items 1 to 19 below are concerned with kinds of writing you have done *in any of your high school courses*. For each item answer the following question:

How successful have you been in this activity?
A. very successful—I have done it well most times I've had to.
B. usually successful—I have done it well more times than not.

C. sometimes successful—I have done it well at times, but I have had problems at other times.
D. not successful—I usually haven't done it well.
E. I don't know—I haven't tried it often enough.

Personal writing

1. essay describing personal experiences or feelings _____
2. journal, diary, or notebook _____

Creative writing

3. short story _____
4. poem _____
5. play or scene for a play _____
6. script for a film or for a radio or television show _____

Persuasive writing

7. essay arguing for a personal opinion or a position on an issue _____
8. letter to the editor of a newspaper or magazine _____
9. advertising material intended to sell a product or service _____

Analysis and criticism

10. essay analyzing some aspect of a work of literature _____
11. review of a book, movie, or television show _____
12. summary or interpretation of a magazine or newspaper article _____

Description and explanation

13. essay explaining how to make or do something _____
14. report on systematic observations you made or procedures you carried out (e.g., for a science experiment) _____
15. major term paper for which you consulted several sources of information _____

Examination writing

16. long essay answers (twenty minutes or more) to examination questions _____

Applied writing

17. note-taking _____
18. outlines and summaries _____
19. applications or résumés _____

Reading Experiences

Items 1 to 16 below are concerned with experiences you have had in reading *in any of your high school courses*. For each item answer the following question:

How successful have you been in this activity?
A. very successful—I have done it well most times I've had to.
B. usually successful—I have done it well more times than not.
C. sometimes successful—I have done it well at times, but I have had problems at other times.
D. not successful—I usually haven't done it well.
E. I don't know—I haven't tried it often enough.

Preparing to read

1. using table of contents, index, or other features of books in locating information or preparing for reading _____
2. surveying or skimming a chapter or an article for a general idea of its contents _____

Reading to understand the author's meaning

3. identifying the major ideas in a chapter or an article _____
4. discovering the meaning of a word from the context in which it is used _____

5. understanding differences in the meanings and implications of closely related words _____
6. understanding how an author develops and supports main ideas _____

Reading to judge the validity of an argument

7. determining assumptions underlying an author's statements _____
8. distinguishing between facts and opinions _____
9. recognizing a faulty argument _____
10. comparing arguments for their relative strengths and weaknesses _____

Reading to respond to an author's tone and intention

11. identifying an author's purpose and how it affects his or her presentation _____
12. recognizing irony, understatement, exaggeration, and other distortions intended to convey meaning _____

Reading to understand the elements in literary analysis

13. understanding setting, plot, and characters _____
14. understanding point of view or persona _____
15. understanding the use of imagery, metaphor, or symbolism _____
16. understanding how particular elements in a work contribute to the interpretation of the whole _____

Speaking and Listening Experiences

Items 1 to 19 below are concerned with experiences you have had in speaking and listening *in any of your high school courses*. For each item answer the following question:

How successful have you been in this activity?

A. very successful—I have done it well most times I've had to.
B. usually successful—I have done it well more times than not.
C. sometimes successful—I have done it well at times, but I have had problems at other times.
D. not successful—I usually haven't done it well.
E. I don't know—I haven't tried it often enough.

Speaking

1. thinking of and developing ideas to speak about _____
2. organizing ideas that you will speak about _____
3. making your points clearly and briefly _____
4. choosing just the right words for the meaning you want to express _____
5. adapting the way you speak to fit the audience and the purpose of the talk _____
6. expressing your own feelings about an issue _____
7. persuading others to your point of view _____
8. providing factual information about a situation or an event _____
9. leading a group discussion _____
10. taking an active part in class discussions _____
11. taking an active part in informal or small group discussions _____

Listening

12. identifying the main ideas in lectures and discussions _____
13. determining assumptions underlying a speaker's statements _____
14. distinguishing between facts and opinions _____
15. understanding when a speaker is using "loaded" words or slanted arguments _____
16. recognizing a faulty argument _____
17. comparing arguments for their relative strengths and weaknesses _____
18. identifying a speaker's purpose and how it affects his or her presentation _____
19. reporting accurately what others have said _____

Profile of Preparation in English

Report for: Joan R. Smith
Inventory completed: Spring, 1983
ID Number: 412-83-8881
Spring of Senior Year

This report is based on your responses to the inventory *Experiences in English*. Its purpose is to help you understand how well prepared you are for the reading, writing, speaking, and listening that will be expected of you in your first year of college work.

The report is meant for your own use. No one else will receive a copy of it or of any information from it that can be identified with you. You may wish to discuss the report with your teacher, guidance counselor, or parent, but that is your choice.

Closely related questions from the inventory have been grouped into ten broad aspects of preparation in English. Your answers for each are summarized and compared with those of a representative group of college-bound high school seniors.

In the tables, summaries of your answers are shown on a scale ranging from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest). Your response for each aspect of preparation is shown by an *X*. The vertical line shows the range of answers given by the middle 50 percent of students who have completed the inventory. Therefore, if the *X* appears above the line, you reported greater success or experience than all but one-fourth of those completing the inventory. If the *X* is on the line, you were in the middle half of those reporting; and if the *X* is below the line, you reported less success or experience than all but one-fourth of those reporting.

Some questions asked how successful you have been in various activities in any of your high school courses.

	Experiences with the Process of Writing	Completing Various Writing Assignments	Reading	Speaking	Listening	Using Reference Sources
Very Successful (5)	*X*				*X*	
Usually Successful (4)	ǀ		ǂ	ǂ	ǀ	ǀ
Sometimes Successful (3)		ǀ				*X*
Not Successful (2)						
No Experience (1)		*X*				

Experiences with the process of writing include such topics as thinking about an assignment, organizing, revising, and developing a good writing style. You reported that you were very successful in these activities. The typical student in a large group answering these questions reported being usually successful in these activities. You rated yourself as more successful than did the typical student answering these questions in thinking about an assignment, developing a good writing style, and writing for different purposes. You rated yourself as less successful than did the typical student in organizing.

You reported that you were usually not successful or had little or no experience in completing various kinds of writing assignments. The typical student answering these questions reported being sometimes successful in these activities. You rated yourself as less successful than did the typical student in persuasive writing, analysis and criticism, and description and explanation.

You reported that you were usually successful in reading. The typical student answering these questions reported being usually successful in reading. You rated yourself as more successful than did the typical student in reading to understand the author's meaning.

You reported that you were usually successful in speaking. The typical student answering these questions reported being usually successful in speaking.

You reported that you were very successful in listening. The typical student reported being usually successful in listening activities.

You reported that you were sometimes successful in using reference sources. The typical student reported being usually successful in using these sources.

Other questions asked how frequently you have been involved in each of several activities.

	Extracurricular Writing	Extracurricular Speech and Drama	Reading Nonfiction	Reading Fiction
Very Frequently (5)				X
Frequently (4)	X			|
Sometimes (3)	|	X		
Infrequently (2)		|	|	
Very Infrequently (1)			X	

You reported frequently writing outside your school course work while you have been in high school. The typical student completing these questions reported that he or she has sometimes done extracurricular writing.

You reported that you have sometimes been involved in extracurricular speech and drama. The typical student reported very infrequent involvement in these activities.

You reported reading no nonfiction books in the last twelve months. The typical student reported reading a few nonfiction works during this period. You reported frequently reading fiction in the last twelve months; the typical student reported sometimes reading fiction.

Profile of Preparation in English

Report for: John L. Smith High School
Inventory completed: Spring, 1983
Spring of Senior Year

This report is based on your students' responses to the inventory *Experiences in English*.

The inventory and the reports based on it have several purposes. One is for a student's own use, to help him or her understand how well prepared he or she is for the reading, writing, speaking, and listening that will be expected in the first year of college work. An individual report comparing the student's responses to those of a representative group of college-bound high school seniors is provided to the student only.

A second purpose is to provide information to high schools. Students' perceptions of their preparation in different aspects of English may be useful to the school in evaluating the needs of its students and the effectiveness of the curriculum in meeting those needs. This information can serve as a supplement to more objective indicators of student skills, such as grades and test scores.

For this report, closely related questions from the inventory have been grouped into ten broad aspects of preparation in English. Your students' answers for each are summarized and compared with those of a representative group of college-bound high school seniors.

In the tables, two distributions of responses are shown for each aspect of preparation. These responses are reported on a scale ranging from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest). The first distribution shows the responses given by your students. The dash indicates the median response, that of a typical student; the vertical line shows the range from the 25th to the 75th percentile. Thus, the table indicates the range of answers given by the middle 50 percent of your students who completed the inventory. The second distribution for each aspect of preparation indicates the median and the range of answers given by the middle 50 percent of all students who have completed the inventory. Below each table is shown the same information in numerical form.

At the end of the report, several of the major aspects of preparation are broken down into more detailed topics. The median response of your students and the median for all students who have completed the inventory are given for each of these topics. To see all the questions on which the summaries are based, refer to the copy of the inventory that is included with this report.

Some questions asked how successful students have been in various activities in any of their high school courses.

For each aspect of preparation, column A gives the distribution of responses for your students, while column B gives the distribution for all students who have completed the inventory.

	Experiences with the Process of Writing		Completing Various Writing Assignments		Reading		Speaking		Listening		Using Reference Sources	
	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
Very Successful (5)												
Usually Successful (4)												
Sometimes Successful (3)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	†	+	+	+
Not Successful (2)												
No Experience (1)												
75th Percentile	4.1	4.2	3.9	3.7	4.4	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.2	4.2
Median	3.8	3.8	3.5	3.3	3.9	3.9	4.1	3.9	4.2	4.0	3.8	3.8
25th Percentile	3.5	3.4	3.0	2.9	3.6	3.5	3.6	3.3	3.6	3.5	3.5	3.4

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Other questions asked how frequently students have been involved in each of several activities.

For each aspect of preparation, column A gives the distribution of responses for your students, while column B gives the distribution for all students who have completed the inventory.

	Extracurricular Writing		Extracurricular Speech and Drama		Reading Nonfiction		Reading Fiction	
	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
Very frequently (5)								
Frequently (4)								
Sometimes (3)								
Infrequently (2)								
Very Infrequently (1)								
75th Percentile	3.2	3.1	1.8	1.7	2.5	2.5	4.2	4.0
Median	2.8	2.6	1.3	1.3	2.1	2.0	3.6	3.5
25th Percentile	2.4	2.2	1.1	1.1	1.8	1.7	2.5	2.5

Several of the aspects of preparation reported have been broken down into more detailed topics. For each of these, column A presents the median response given by your students, while column B presents the median response of all students who have completed the inventory.

	Median Respons	
	A	
Experiences with the Process of Writing		
Thinking about an assignment	4.0	4.0
Organizing	3.8	3.8
Revising	3.8	4.0
Developing a good writing style	4.0	3.5
Writing for different purposes	3.8	3.6
Completing Various Kinds of Writing Assignments		
Personal writing	4.5	4.0
Creative writing	3.0	2.7
Persuasive writing	3.0	3.0
Analysis and criticism	3.6	3.6
Description and explanation	4.0	4.0
Examination writing	4.0	4.0
Applied writing	4.0	4.0
Reading		
Preparing to read	5.0	4.5
Reading to understand the author's meaning	4.0	4.0
Reading to judge the validity of an argument	4.4	4.0
Reading to respond to an author's tone and intention	4.0	4.0
Reading to understand the elements in literary analysis	4.2	4.0